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COORDINATION QUESTIONS

Preparation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report contains proposals regarding the framework of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001. It was prepared in accordance with the timetable for the preparation of the plan, which was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1989/105.

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INTRODUCTION

1. In resolution 1988/59, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and within existing financial resources, to initiate the formulation of a system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, directed towards the objectives of equality, development and peace, for the period 1996-2001, taking into account the priorities recommended by the Economic and Social Council, the provisions of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the views and decisions of the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, on the content of the plan, as well as experience in developing the system-wide medium-term plan for women and development for the period 1990-1995.

2. The Secretary-General reported to the Council, at the first regular session of 1989, on the preparation of the new system-wide medium-term plan (see E/1989/9). The report was made available to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee for Programme and Coordination. The Secretary-General suggested in the report that the proposed plan be submitted to the Council at its second regular session of 1993 in time to provide guidance for the preparation of the individual medium-term plans of the system for the 1996-2001 cycle. He further suggested that a preliminary report outlining the proposed framework of the plan be submitted to the Council in 1992 through the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee for Programme and Coordination so that the Council would have before it the views of both those bodies on the matter; the detailed plan was to be elaborated on the basis of the comments of those bodies.

3. The Council, in resolution 1989/105, endorsed the timetable proposed by the Secretary-General for the preparation of a system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001 (E/1989/9, para. 6). It requested the Secretary-General, in formulating the plan, to pay particular attention to the strengthening of national machinery for the advancement of women and to specific sectoral themes that cut across the three objectives - equality, development and peace - of the Forward-looking Strategies, such as literacy, education, population, health and the full participation of women in decision-making. That request was reiterated by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/98 of 16 December 1991, in which the Assembly also identified the sectoral theme of the impact of technology on the environment and its effect on women.

4. The present report contains proposals regarding the framework of the plan. These proposals have been determined in consultation with the organizations of the United Nations system.

I. SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE PROPOSED SYSTEM-WIDE PLAN

5. The system-wide plan will cover the last five years of the period designated for the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The priorities to be followed during that period will be determined by the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in 1995. The preparatory process for the Conference is expected to involve an examination of major obstacles to the achievement of the objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies and the most effective means of removing those obstacles. It follows that the new system-wide plan should reflect the priorities in terms of the specific objectives to be pursued.

6. The focus of the plan would be a limited set of joint or cooperative actions that could eliminate obstacles and achieve the objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies. Rather than trying to reflect all the activities of the system regarding the advancement of women, it would centre on those activities where the interrelationships between different organizations were particularly critical for success. It would emphasize the specific objectives of individual organizations that had a system-wide importance, specific objectives that were common to several organizations and objectives that supported joint activities.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSED SYSTEM-WIDE PLAN

7. It is proposed to follow the format of the system-wide medium-term plan for women and development for the period 1990-1995 and prepare the new plan based on programmes and subprogrammes that are still equivalent to the concepts used in medium-term programme planning in individual organizations of the system.

8. The 1990-1995 system-wide plan contained a combination of substantive and methodological programmes, some concerned with the policy issues involved and at least one concerned with methods and approaches to implementation. This approach successfully incorporated the main types of concerns both of Member States and of the organizations of the United Nations system.

9. The 1996-2001 system-wide plan will differ from the 1990-1995 plan in that it should cover all aspects of the advancement of women. The only aspect of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women that is not covered explicitly in the 1990-1995 plan is the objective of peace. This issue will have to be explicitly included in the new plan. The evolution in conceptualizing issues related to the advancement of women that has occurred since the framework of the 1990-1995 plan was determined requires that some adjustment be made to the grouping and titles of programmes and subprogrammes.

10. In addition, it will be necessary to incorporate a number of issues on a cross-sectoral basis in the respective programmes and subprogrammes. These include literacy, education, population, health and the environment and issues relating to changing lifestyles.

11. With these considerations in mind, it is proposed that the plan comprise seven programmes, including a programme on peace. The proposed structure is as follows:

PROGRAMME 1. ELIMINATION OF LEGAL AND ATTITUDINAL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

Subprogramme 1.1 International standards

Subprogramme 1.2 Promoting more positive attitudes towards the role and status of women in the family and society

PROGRAMME 2. PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES, INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

Subprogramme 2.1 Overall trends and policies in trade and women's employment

Subprogramme 2.2 Vocational training and training for employment and production

Subprogramme 2.3 Food and agriculture

Subprogramme 2.4 Industry

Subprogramme 2.5 Entrepreneurship and access to credit

Subprogramme 2.6 Informal sector

PROGRAMME 3. HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Subprogramme 3.1 Health, nutrition and family planning

Subprogramme 3.2 Literacy, education and training

Subprogramme 3.3 Social infrastructure and support services, including housing, settlements, water, sanitation, energy and transport

Subprogramme 3.4 Higher education, science and technology

PROGRAMME 4. PROMOTION OF PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Subprogramme 4.1 Participation of women in the peace process and international conflict resolution

Subprogramme 4.2 Eradication of violence against women in the family and society

PROGRAMME 5. DECISION-MAKING

Subprogramme 5.1 Partnership in decision-making and governance at all levels

Subprogramme 5.2 Participation in management at all levels, including natural resource management

Subprogramme 5.3 Participation in groups, associations, cooperatives, trade unions and other non-governmental organizations

PROGRAMME 6. IMPROVING MEANS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTION

Subprogramme 6.1 Development of statistics and indicators

Subprogramme 6.2 Information dissemination

Subprogramme 6.3 Research, policy analysis and dissemination

Subprogramme 6.4 Technical cooperation, training and advisory services

PROGRAMME 7. COMPREHENSIVE INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Subprogramme 7.1 Analysis of the interrelationship of factors affecting women and development

Subprogramme 7.2 Monitoring and review and appraisal of basic policy guidelines and national experience

Subprogramme 7.3 Strengthening national machineries and mechanisms for planning and policy-making

Subprogramme 7.4 Coordinating a system-wide approach to women and development and the environment

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